

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A service management apparatus for use in a network system capable of providing various services dispersed in plural apparatuses, for managing the
5 service information on the various services present on said network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the service management apparatus comprising:

10 test means for executing a process of trial use of the service;

evaluation means for evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

15 renewal means for renewing the managed service information based on the evaluated quality.
2. A service management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said evaluation means evaluates the
20 result of trial use of the service by a predetermined evaluation function.
3. A service management apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said renewal means deletes the managed
25 service information in case the evaluation by said evaluation function does not meet a predetermined reference.

4. A service management apparatus according to
claim 2, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the
quality based on the time required for calling the
service.

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5. A service management apparatus according to
claim 2, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the
quality based on the frequency of error generated by
the service calling.

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6. A service management apparatus according to
claim 1, wherein:

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said test means executes an access process for
writing and reading data on trial basis for a storage
service; and

said evaluation means evaluates the quality of
said storage service based on the result of said access
process.

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7. A service management apparatus according to
claim 1, wherein said evaluation means detects the
number of colors or recording sheets available in the
service and evaluates the quality based on the number
of colors or recording sheets available in the service.

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8. A service management apparatus according to
claim 1, wherein the plural apparatuses include a

printer.

9. An apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

test means for executing a process of trial use of the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

evaluation means for evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

deletion means for instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to delete the service information from said service management apparatus.

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10. An apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

test means for executing a process of trial use of

the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

evaluation means for evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of
5 the service; and

substitution means for instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to substitute the service provided by said another
10 apparatus with a service provided by said apparatus.

11. A service management method for use in a network system capable of providing various services dispersed in plural apparatuses, for managing the
15 service information on the various services present on said network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the service management method comprising:

20 a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service;

an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

25 a renewal step of renewing the managed service information based on the evaluated quality.

12. A service management method according to
claim 11, wherein said evaluation step evaluates the
result of trial use of the service by a predetermined
evaluation function.

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13. A service management method according to
claim 12, wherein said renewal step deletes the managed
service information in case the evaluation by said
evaluation function does not meet a predetermined
reference.

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14. A service management method according to
claim 12, wherein said evaluation function evaluates
the quality based on the time required for calling the
service.

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15. A service management method according to
claim 12, wherein said evaluation function evaluates
the quality based on the frequency of error generated
by the service calling.

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16. A service management method according to
claim 11, wherein:
said test step executes an access process for
writing and reading data on trial basis for a storage
service; and
said evaluation step evaluates the quality of said

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storage service based on the result of said access process.

17. A service management method according to
5 claim 11, wherein said evaluation step detects the
number of colors or recording sheets available in the
service and evaluates the quality based on the number
of colors or recording sheets available in the service.

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18. A service management method according to
claim 11, wherein the plural apparatuses include a
printer.

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19. A method for use in an apparatus connected to
a service management apparatus for managing the service
information on the various services present on a
network system and transferring the managed service
information in response to a request from an external
apparatus, the method comprising:

20 a test step of executing a process of trial use of
the service of another apparatus belonging to a same
group;

25 an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of
said service, based on the result of the trial use of
the service; and

a deletion step of instructing, in case the

evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to delete the service information from said service management apparatus.

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20. A method for use in an apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring the managed service 10 information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the method comprising:

a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

15 an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

20 a substitution step of instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to substitute the service provided by said another apparatus with a service provided by said apparatus.

25 21. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method for use in a network system capable of providing various services dispersed in plural apparatuses, for managing the

service information on the various services present on said network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

- 5 a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service;
- an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and
- 10 a renewal step of renewing the managed service information based on the evaluated quality.

22. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to
15 claim 21, wherein said evaluation step evaluates the result of trial use of the service by a predetermined evaluation function.

23. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to
20 claim 22, wherein said renewal step deletes the managed service information in case the evaluation by said evaluation function does not meet a predetermined reference.

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24. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to

claim 22, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the quality based on the time required for calling the service.

5 25. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to claim 22, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the quality based on the frequency of error generated by the service calling.

10 26. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to claim 21, wherein:

15 said test step executes an access process for writing and reading data on trial basis for a storage service; and

20 said evaluation step evaluates the quality of said storage service based on the result of said access process.

25 27. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to claim 21, wherein said evaluation step detects the number of colors or recording sheets available in the service and evaluates the quality based on the number of colors or recording sheets available in the service.

28. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a service management method according to claim 21, wherein the plural apparatuses include a printer.

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29. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a method for use in an apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on 10 a network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

15 a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

20 a deletion step of instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to delete the service information from said service management apparatus.

25 30. A computer readable storage medium storing a program for a method for use in an apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the

service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

5 a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

10 an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

15 a substitution step of instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to substitute the service provided by said another apparatus with a service provided by said apparatus.

31. A computer program for a service management method for use in a network system capable of providing various services dispersed in plural apparatuses, for managing the service information on the various services present on said network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

25 a test step of executing a process of trial use of the service;

an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of

said service, based on the result of the trial use of the service; and

a renewal step of renewing the managed service information based on the evaluated quality.

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32. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 31, wherein said evaluation step evaluates the result of trial use of the service by a predetermined evaluation function.

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33. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 32, wherein said renewal step deletes the managed service information in case the evaluation by said evaluation function does not meet a 15 predetermined reference.

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34. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 32, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the quality based on the time required for calling the service.

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35. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 32, wherein said evaluation function evaluates the quality based on the frequency of error generated by the service calling.

36. A computer program for a service management

method according to claim 31, wherein:

 said test step executes an access process for writing and reading data on trial basis for a storage service; and

5 said evaluation step evaluates the quality of said storage service based on the result of said access process.

10 37. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 31, wherein said evaluation step detects the number of colors or recording sheets available in the service and evaluates the quality based on the number of colors or recording sheets available in the service.

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38. A computer program for a service management method according to claim 31, wherein the plural apparatuses include a printer.

20 39. A computer program for a method for use in an apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

25 a test step of executing a process of trial use of

the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of
5 the service; and

a deletion step of instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to delete the service information from said service management
10 apparatus.

40. A computer program for a method for use in an apparatus connected to a service management apparatus for managing the service information on the various services present on a network system and transferring
15 the managed service information in response to a request from an external apparatus, the program comprising:

a test step of executing a process of trial use of
20 the service of another apparatus belonging to a same group;

an evaluation step of evaluating the quality of said service, based on the result of the trial use of
the service; and

25 a substitution step of instructing, in case the evaluated quality does not meet a predetermined reference, said service management apparatus to

substitute the service provided by said another
apparatus with a service provided by said apparatus.